

Claims Listing:

1. – 25. (Cancelled)
26. (Previously presented) A method for producing a vehicle axle comprising:
 - directing a first blank (1) through a furnace (2) and heating the blank (1) to a working temperature;
 - directing the first blank (1) between a pair of rollers (3, 4) having profiled surfaces and thereby forming the first blank (1) into an intermediate product having a predetermined profile along a longitudinal extent thereof;
 - feeding the first blank (1) to a forging press having a number of cooperating die pads, and working the first blank (1) by die forging to form a substantially finished product having a cross section substantially in the form of a hat profile of predetermined height, width and material thickness along a length thereof;
 - placing in connection with the hat profiled first blank (1), a second blank (14) having essentially the same profile as the hat profile of the first blank (1) in the dividing plane of the cooperating die pads; and
 - joining the first (1) and the second blank (14) together at respective edges thereof and forming a composite vehicle axle (18),
 - wherein the first and the second blank are simultaneously heated using heating means introduced between the first and second blank, which blanks are held between a pair of cooperating die pads in a press and the first and second blank are joined together by forge welding.
27. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 26, wherein the heating is effected by means of one of induction elements, an induction furnace, and a gas flame.

28. – 34. (Cancelled)

35. (Previously presented) A method for producing a vehicle axle comprising:
directing a first blank (1) through a furnace (2) and heating the blank (1) to a working
temperature;

directing the first blank (1) between a pair of rollers (3, 4) having profiled surfaces and
thereby forming the first blank (1) into an intermediate product having a predetermined profile
along a longitudinal extent thereof;

feeding the first blank (1) to a forging press having a number of cooperating die pads, and
working the first blank (1) by die forging to form a substantially finished product having a cross
section substantially in the form of a hat profile of predetermined height, width and material
thickness along a length thereof;

placing in connection with the hat profiled first blank (1), a second blank (14) that is
substantially flat in that said second blank lacks a cavity but that otherwise matches the contours
of an upper, joining surface of the first blank (1); and

joining the first (1) and the second blank (14) together at respective edges thereof and
forming a composite vehicle axle (18);

wherein the vehicle axle comprises said first blank having a cross section substantially
taking the form of a hat profile and said second blank that forms a lid for the first blank and that
is joined together with the first blank along side surfaces of the hat profile.

36. (Cancelled)